



# City of Gunnison Strategic Planning

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## The Need for Strategic Planning

The City of Gunnison uses the council-manager form of government, wherein City Council is responsible for the legislative function of the municipality such as establishing policy, passing ordinances, appropriating funds, and developing an overall vision. The Manager's role is to implement the policies and course that has been established by the Council. This form of government is recognized as the structure most conducive to the efficient and ethical management of local communities.

Recently, the City Manager met with members of council to formulate some goals. The need to create and implement a Strategic Planning process was a primary result of that discussion. Ken Coleman's April 17, 2015 memo states the process will be, "an initial step in the annual budget development where Council and staff meet to formulate priorities for our organization. These will determine what further budget items are included to support these set priorities and are incorporated into the work plan."

By launching a strategic plan, the City of Gunnison can ensure:

- 1) Priorities are used to inform all decision making processes including resource allocation during creation of the annual budget and establishment of employee work plans,
- 2) Continuity during changes in leadership, and
- 3) Relatively scarce resources are focused on longer-term objectives, especially throughout the year when "putting out fires" and responding to constituent requests.

Staff recommends implementing the strategic process that has been developed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The new process should allow the City of Gunnison to:

- Understand change, forecast change and set a course of action to manage the expected implications of change
- Engage the community and create enthusiasm for the future
- Prioritize goals in line with available funding
- Cause decision making to be proactive rather than reactive
- Promote trust, honesty, and respect between and among decision makers and members of the community
- Tie the strategic direction directly to work plans and budgeting

## Process for Strategic Planning



The strategic plan is a living document. As shown above, the strategic planning process is continuous and is connected to other planning documents such as the capital improvement plan and the annual budget. The priorities that have been established during the planning process inform resource allocation decisions during the budgeting process and establishment of work plans.

Although it is important that the plan doesn't change dramatically from year to year, as soon as the plan has been "completed", an environmental scan must take place to determine whether the plan should change. The definition of the word *strategic* is, "relating to the identification of long-term or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them." Since most strategic goals cannot be accomplished within one year, changing the plan dramatically from year to year can inhibit progress. However, assessing progress includes determining which tactics are working and reaction to changing local conditions.

## Grounding Process

Documenting the concepts of a grounding process at the onset of the plan can be useful later because it outlines basic expectations that can be referred to throughout the planning process. Grounding factors, listed as under the following set of questions, are summarized in this document and will be used by the Council and Management Staff as guidelines throughout the process.

- What are the topics (systems) to be addressed?

- What is the purpose of the process?
- What is the process meant to achieve?
- What are the hopes and fears of participants?
- What are the givens that will direct the plan's development?
- What are the expected outcomes?
- Who is responsible for developing the plan?
- What are the deliverables?

#### What are the Topics (systems) to be Addressed?

Generally, the strategic components will consist of policy directives related fiduciary directives, organizational functions, municipal service provisions and other similar topics as determined by the City Council. Fiscal components will focus on identifying and prioritizing capital expenditure needs over a five to ten year period, and characterizing resource needs associated with maintaining and improving public services provided to the community. Organizational functions will define human resource requirements; set forth assets needed for efficient city administration; and identifying training resources requirements to maintain a professionally competent staff. Municipal services provisions will focus on resources necessary to maintain community amenities, programs and facilities. The initial topic categories contemplated in the Council's Strategic planning process are as follows:

- Existing and Projected Fiscal Conditions
- Capital Improvement Priorities
- Program needs
- Fix assets priorities
- Anticipated staffing needs
- Funding for other external organizations
- Sustaining grants from various sources
- Identifying service limitations

#### What is the purpose of the process?

The purpose of this process is to establish a strategic road map that the City Council will follow when making decisions related to budgeting, organizational functions and improving community services. The process will explore existing community and organizational needs that in turn will help to provide direction for making sound policy decisions that enhance the functions and resiliency of our City government.

#### What is the process meant to achieve?

The process is meant to achieve an open and honest dialog between the Council, City staff, and greater community resulting in focused strategic guidelines that will help direct the efficient and open governance. The final product will be used to evaluate budget decisions and it will serve as a general blueprint to guide the future policy and operational decisions of the City.

#### What are the hopes and fears of participants?

The City hopes to develop a plan that is utilitarian in context and that will be used rather than placed on a shelf and forgotten. Involving the entire community is also desired and the initial onset of this process will be tied to results from the February 2015 Community

Analysis. Additional public outreach occurs through input provided by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission and public workshops as deemed necessary.

While specific fears are not readily defined, there is concern that the process will lead into meaningless topical debates fraught with minutia.

#### What are the givens that will direct the plan's development?

- 1) As stated in the City Charter, the Council has conferred powers, except as otherwise provided in the Charter or by statute, to adopt laws, ordinances and resolutions as it shall deem proper in the exercise thereof. It is anticipated that certain strategic guidelines adopted by the plan will require ratification through established processes.
- 2) Under provisions of the City Charter, the City Manager is delegated the responsibilities that include, but are not limited to, ensuring efficient administration of the city; recommending an annual budget to Council under the policies formulated by the Council; and exercise and preform all administrative functions that are not imposed by the Charter or other governing document.
- 3) Public involvement is open to anyone and opinions will be respected.
- 4) Existing plans that have relevant relationship to this process include, but are not limited to:
  - Five Year Capital Plan
  - Annual Budget and budget development policies
  - Land Development Code
  - The City Master Plan
  - Gunnison Community Analysis (February 2015)
  - Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
  - VanTuyl Ranch Management Plan
  - West Gunnison Neighborhood Plan
  - Gunnison Rising PUD Development Standards
- 5) The Strategic Plan will focus on three to five (perhaps up to ten) top priorities. Most should be accomplishable within the next year or two. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

#### What are the expected outcomes?

In the simplest of terms, the expected outcome is to complete and adopt the Strategic Plan in the next two to three months so that it is available for informing decisions made during the 2016 budget process.

#### Who is responsible for developing the plan?

Under the direction of the City Council, the City Manager is responsible for development of the Strategic Plan. Final review and plan adoption will involve a public review process under the direction of the City Council.

An Advisory Committee consisting of Planning and Zoning Commission representatives, City staff members and selected citizens may help facilitate detailed review and provide direction during development of the plan.

#### What are the deliverables?

It is anticipated that several reports will be presented to the City Council during the review process. However, the Strategic Plan will be a concise document providing specific policy directives that can be implemented in a fiscally responsible manner.

Since the City is administering development of the plan the question of deliverables, which usually identifies the number of hard-copies and electronic copies that are required under a contract with a consulting firm, is moot.

## Timeline

The timeline below demonstrates there are many moving parts related to planning at the City of Gunnison. This timeline is a draft presentation of planning efforts to be undertaken.

DATE	EFFORT	DESCRIPTION
07/07/15	Goal Setting	Determination of strategic goals/priorities for the strategic plan with assistance from the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs.
07/14/15	Goal Refinement	Review of strategic goals after a "cooling-off" period and assignment of team leaders to strategic goals and assignment of team leaders for each goal.
07/20/15	City Fest	Public input is invited for strategic plan priorities and capital projects
07/28/15	<b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>	Adoption of the Final Capital Improvement Plan
07/28/15	Objectives and Tactics Presentation	Team leaders present their draft objectives and tactics for each strategic goal to Management Staff.
08/03/15	Budget Kick-Off	Distribution of budget manual, worksheets and preliminary wage analysis
08/04/15	Strategic Plan Presentation	Presentation of the draft strategic plan to City Council.
<b>08/11/15</b>	<b>STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTION</b>	Adoption of the strategic plan
08/21/15	Contracts for Service Applications	Distribution of contracts for service guidelines and the application for funding to community organizations
08/25/15	Abstract of Assessments	Assessor must submit abstract of assessments reflecting assessed values of property in the County by class and subclass to the Division of Property Taxation and must also submit a preliminary certification to all taxing entities CRS 39-2-115
<b>08/21/15</b>	<b>BUDGET SUBMITTAL DUE</b>	All budget worksheets and special budget requests are due
09/11/15	Special Requests	City staff meets to consider special requests for capital projects, budget enhancements, IT equipment and new staff. Deadline for Contracts for Service applications.
10/02/15	SPB Deadline	Deadline for changes to the Staff Proposed Budget. Begin creation of the Staff Proposed Budget document.
<b>10/13/15</b>	<b>STAFF PROPOSED BUDGET</b>	Submittal of the Staff Proposed Budget to City Council. <i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: October 15</i>
10/20-11/17/15	Budget Work Sessions	Council meets with staff to consider input revises the Staff Proposed Budget as they deem necessary
10/20/15	Grants and Contracts	Grants & Contracts for Service presentations from applicants
<b>11/10/15 7:00 PM</b>	<b>BUDGET PUBLIC</b>	Public hearing on the proposed budget. Notice of the time and place of the hearing must be published at least 5 days prior.

	<b>HEARING</b>	<i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: November 15</i>
11/24/15	First Reading of Budget	First reading of ordinances for the mill levy, budget and prior year amendments
<b>12/08/15</b>	<b>BUDGET ADOPTION</b>	Council adopts on final reading an ordinance for the budget and an ordinance of the annual appropriations. <i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: December 15</i>
12/08/15	Additional Appropriations	Final reading for July through December budget amendments.
12/10/15	Final Assessed Valuation	Final deadline for County Assessor to certify changes in assessed valuation to local jurisdictions and the Division of Property Taxation (CRS 39-1-111 (5)) <i>Statutory deadline: December 10</i>
12/22/15	Mill Levy Certification	Board of County Commissioners certifies all taxing entities' mill levies to the County Assessor. <i>Statutory deadline: December 22</i>
01/31/16	Budget Document	Final budget document sent to Division of Local Government and available on the City website
02/28/16	Strategic Plan Assessment	Assessment of progress made on Strategic Plan.

## Format

While many organizations plan strategically, they often use a variety of different terminology. The City of Gunnison will move forward using Goals, Objectives and Tactics as presented by the ICMA.

### Goals

Goals usually address long-term issues and they must be directly tied to the vision statement of the City of Gunnison. They do not include a great deal of specificity. Rather, they are a generalized statement of where the City of Gunnison wants to be at some point in the future. Goals can include a focus on economic vitality, sustainability, healthy communities, public safety, transportation and an assortment of other areas.

*An example goal is, "Strengthen the leadership, vision, and planning of the City of Gunnison."*

### Objectives

Each goal statement in the strategic plan will be followed by one or more objectives and they begin to provide the specificity and measurability.

*An example objective is, "By August 11, 2015, the City of Gunnison will adopt its first strategic plan."*

### Tactics

Tactics represent action steps or strategies to accomplish the measurements designated in each objective. They are generally presented in a logical order.

*Some example tactics are,*

- *July 7, 2015 – work session to identify broad strategic goals*
- *July 14, 2015 - refine broad strategic goals, confirm Council support for the stated goals, determine rough objectives associated with the goals and identify team leaders for each goal*
- *July 20, 2015 – gauge public acceptance of strategic priorities at City Fest.*
- *July 8-July 28, 2015 – City staff works to identify objectives and associated tactics to accomplish the goals.*
- *August 4, 2015 – work session to consider proposed objectives and tactics*
- *August 11, 2015 – strategic plan adoption*

## Conclusion

The world and community is changing at a rapid pace. It is important to recognize that the City of Gunnison can help shape the community and influence our city's future direction. Initiating a strategic planning process allows our organization to provide an even higher level of service and address community issues in a well thought out way. Even with a solid road map to guide us, it is important to incorporate flexibility into this approach. The plan should allow the City to respond more effectively and ultimately serve the best interests of our citizens.